

Frederick B. Culver House
809 E Street, N.W.
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-220

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
801 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

FREDERICK B. CULVER HOUSE

Location: 809 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: Michael L. & S. M. Gatti
2070 Foxhall Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

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Present Use: Rooming house.

Brief Statement of Significance: A town house representing the immediate post-Civil War era.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Constructed by Frederick B. Culver (Zephaniah Jones, builder) in 1868 or 1869 on east half of orig. lot #2 of sq. 406. Building costs: \$16,568.91.

Trust Deed 658-397 rec. Oct. 14, 1871 shows that on Oct. 12, 1871 Frederick B. Culver deeded to Hyde & Thom, trs. (Culver owed William W. Corcoran \$12,000--upon default Corcoran could order sale at auction.)

Culver defaulted & property was sold at auction to William W. Corcoran on August 29, 1878 for \$15,000. [Deed 895-156 rec. Oct. 3, 1878]

On Sept. 30, 1878 Corcoran deeded to Trs. of Corcoran Gallery of Art for \$15,000. [895-151 rec. Oct. 3, 1878]

The Trs. of Corcoran Gallery of Art deeded to Louis P. Gatti on May 1, 1911 [3423-335 rec. May 4, 1911].

Louis P. Gatti deeded to Stephen M. Gatti, et al., et ux. on Dec. 20, 1962. [Deed 11922-193 rec. Dec. 12, 1962]

According to Deed 12779-578 rec. July 31, 1967, Stephen M. Gatti, et al., et ux., deeded to Karla H. Harrison on July 17, 1967.

2. Date of erection: 1868 or 1869.
3. Builder or contractor: Zephaniah Jones, builder.

B. Sources of information: District of Columbia records.

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest and merit: A mid-nineteenth century house of traditional type, consisting of front and back buildings, illustrating the neighborhood character at the close of the Civil War.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 26'4" front X 100' deep; 3-bay-wide front; 4 1/2 stories; L-shaped.
2. Foundations: High.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Walls are brick, which are now painted white. The lower level of the building has stucco facing.
4. Structural systems, framing: Masonry bearing walls and wooden floor and roof framing.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: There is a cast-iron stairway leading up one half story to the main entrance. This stairway is approx. 5'6" wide with eight 8" risers. The treads are 11" deep with 1" of nosing. The handrailing is cast iron with some ornamentation. The entire stairway is painted black.
6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys on either side of the central portion, three chimneys on the north wing of building. All chimneys are made of brick
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entrance opening is in the left bay and is 4'1" X 7'7", trimmed in wood moulding. The opening has double doors with two wood moulded vertical panels. The top panel is

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of glass and the doors appear to be the original doors. The main entrance is elevated a half story and has a transom light above the door. Above the opening is a horizontal wood entablature supported by an embellished wood bracket at each end with a course of smaller wood brackets between them. The entire opening has wood moulded trim painted white.

There is another opening directly below the main entrance just below ground level. This entrance is similar to the main entrance and measures 1' X 6'8". It too has double wood moulded doors having three vertical panels. These doors are probably original. On the same level is the entrance to a now abandoned commercial shop. This entrance is somewhat modernized and measures 4' X 6'8". It has wood moulded trim and a moulded door with a glass panel. This is a later alteration.

There is a 3' X 7' opening on the east wall of the north wing with double wooden doors. These doors have vertical wood moulded panels and are probably original.

- b. Windows and shutters: The three bay wide wall has one simple double-hung window (2/2) per bay. The windows are wood moulded with a simple sill and a moulded cap. The window on the 2nd, 3rd, & 4th stories are identical. The first story windows are slightly wider and have greater indentation. Below the first story is a glass storefront having one double-hung wood moulded window (2/2).

The north wall of the central portion of the building has simple double-hung windows (6/6) with smaller square windows in the 2nd and 3rd bays at the fourth story.

The east wall of the north wing has simple double-hung windows (6/6) with wood moulded trim and brick detailing at the top. The north wall of the north wing also has double-hung windows.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The central portion of the building has a gabled roof with the ridge running east to west. The north wing has a shed roof with small slope to the east.
- b. Cornice: Simple moulded cornice made of wood and supported by a course of small ornamental brackets.

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C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: One enters from the south into a side hall into which three rooms lead. There is a stair leading to the second floor where a north wing extends and which has a longitudinal hall with six adjacent rooms on the east side of the wall.
2. Stairways: A stairway leading to the second floor is wood constructed and has nineteen 7" risers. The treads are 11" deep and are covered with a rubber mat. There is a wood moulded handrail painted brown and yellow. The stairway is 3'5" wide and has an open well.
3. Flooring: The floors are wood constructed and covered with linoleum. There are 9" wood thresholds at doorways.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plastered and are covered with wallpaper. A wood moulded dado board 3'9" from floor is visible along with a 9" wood moulded baseboard. There is a 10' plaster ceiling also covered with wallpaper and painted white.

A portion of the wall under the stairway is covered with wood paneling and also has a baseboard.

5. Doorways and doors: All interior doorways and doors are typical. The doorway is approximately 8'4" high and is trimmed in wood moulding having no corner blocks.

The door measures 3' X 7' and has four moulded panels. There is a 1' panel above the door which was probably a glass light but now is wood.

6. Mechanical equipment: There are old heating fixtures visible with some modern fixtures. Most of the plumbing and lighting is quite old.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General Setting: The building faces south onto E Street N.W. An adjacent building stands to the west and the empty site of a once adjacent building lies to the east.

2. Outbuildings: There is an old brick one-story shed at the north end of the building. It is now abandoned but probably served as a storage area.

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National Park Service
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